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Venezuela suspends imports of fruits and fruit concentrates

Report Categories:

Fresh Fruit

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Report Highlights:

Venezuelan authorities have recently stopped granting import licenses for fruit concentrate and pulp, adding to restrictions placed last year on apples and pears. A reported shortage of foreign exchange might limit future trade. FAS/Caracas provides information summarized from official reports and local media on statements made by the Ministry of Food and the Venezuelan Fruit Association.

General Information:

In October 2009, the Ministry of Food began restricting access to documents necessary to import apples and pears. Subsequently, access to foreign exchange via the Foreign Exchange Administration Commission, (CADIVI) was limited for these products, too. In a recent development, import permission was restricted for fruit juice concentrates and fruit pulp from Chile, materials necessary for the domestic juice industry. Although some companies in the industry have working stocks of up to six months that will allow them to continue their operations, juice shortages could begin before the end of the year as other companies have lower availability.

According to Carlos Gonzalez, President of the Venezuelan Fruit Association, the supply of imported fruits such as apples, pears, grapes, plums, kiwis, and peaches, which are imported mainly from Chile and the United States, has declined by more than 80 percent.

González added that three weeks ago the Venezuelan Fruit Association met with officials from the Ministry of Food who said that the imports permits would be resumed. However, they also said that the government would not grant dollars at the preferential exchange rate to import fruits because there is no foreign currency availability. According to Gonzalez, if the allocation of import permits is not restarted, within 1.5 months, there will not be any imported fruit on the domestic market.

According to industry analysts, domestic production of fruit has fallen, due in part to a severe drought in the last year.

SOURCE: Government Statements and Media Reports